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Editorial

"WHEREVER the question of the language of the Christian Gospel is taken seriously", wrote Prof. Paul Tillich in *The Interpretation of History* (p. 46), "great difficulties arise. It is certain the original religious terminology, as it is used in the Bible and in the liturgies of the Ancient Church, cannot be supplanted. . . . But these original or archetypal words have been robbed of their original power by our objective thinking, and the scientific conception of the world, and thus have become subject to dissolution. . . . A situation is hopeless and meaningless in which the speaker means the original word, and the listener hears the objective word. Thus, we may understand the proposal, which is meant symbolically rather than literally, that the Church impose a thirty-year silence upon all of its archetypal words."

A great deal is said nowadays about "the problem of communication". There are two sides to this problem. Preachers of the Gospel need the art of communicating their message to hearers to whom its language and presuppositions are like a closed book. But they also need to make sure that the original terms of the message have been authentically apprehended by their own minds. To meet this second need an increasing amount of help is available. Early this year[1] we welcomed the publication of the first two of a series of translations of the major articles in Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*. No less welcome is the appearance of *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, edited by Dr Alan Richardson.[2] Thirty British scholars have contributed to this notable work, which preachers, theological students and any who speak or write about the Christian Faith will find to be one of their handiest and most useful books of reference. It would be even more useful if fuller bibliographical information could be added to the more important entries, including reference to pertinent articles in English theological periodicals. Perhaps this suggestion will be considered in a future edition. But the contributors have certainly taken into account the large amount of fresh light that learned research has thrown on the meaning of biblical words since the publication of, *e.g.*, Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*. The whole volume is informed by a constructive theological interest and indeed, as the editor says, is written from a common point of view. It will make a handsome Christmas present.

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Last December we called attention to a number of outstanding books of general theological interest which had been reviewed in the

[1] THEOLOGY, April, 1950, p. 82. [2] S.C.M. Press, 25s.

course of the preceding twelve months. This seems to have been appreciated by the fortunate recipients of book tokens and we therefore append a corresponding list of books for 1950. In the case of each book the month and page on which a review or notice will be found is added. When we had prepared the list we observed the odd fact that all the authors' surnames begin with letters in the first half of the alphabet!

The Belief in Progress. By John Baillie. Oxford University Press. 10s. 6d. (July, p. 241.)

The Christian Doctrine of God. By Emil Brunner. Lutterworth Press. 21s. (March, p. 81.)

The English Inheritance. By G. Kitson Clark. S.C.M. Press. 15s. (August, p. 281.)

Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind. By Henri de Lubac, S.J. Burns Oates and Washbourne. 15s. (July, p. 278.)

The Catholicity of Protestantism. Edited by R. Newton Flew and Rupert E. Davies. Lutterworth Press. 5s. (October, p. 361.)

A Year of Grace: Passages Chosen and Arranged to Express a Mood about God and Man. By Victor Gollancz. Gollancz. 10s. 6d. (December, p. 470.)

Should Women be Priests? By R. W. Howard. Blackwell. 2s. 6d. (April, p. 121.)

Early Christian Creeds. By J. N. D. Kelly. Longmans. 26s. (October, p. 389.)

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In wishing our readers a happy Christmas, we invite them once again to remember that a year's subscription to THEOLOGY might prove an acceptable gift to some of their friends, and a leaflet is enclosed with this number which may be used for the purpose. A feature of THEOLOGY in 1951 will be a series of articles on "Great Preachers", which will begin in January with one on "Origen" by Père Jean Daniélou, S.J.

The Incarnation in English Poetry

I. OUR title has a ludicrously futile ring about it. How can the greatest of all possible wonders be adequately expressed in words, or escape that destruction of beauty which banality in verse may bring? Yet the Incarnation, for all its vastness, must be *spoken* about—preached to the furthest corners of the earth; and if, on so vast a subject, prose halts, poetry sometimes (it is her function) can scale the heights. If great poetry deals always with the realities of life, love and death, if indeed *mentem mortalia tangunt,* poetry was bound, sooner or later, to assume her mantle and deal with that which can touch to the quick more human hearts than any other subject.

The idea of divine Incarnation was always lurking in the background of human imagination. The gods could come to earth to

satisfy their lusts; and Vergil, purer soul, *anima naturaliter Christiana*, could envisage a higher conception of power used for human good. He found verse dignified enough to sing *an* incarnation in words worthy to honour Augustus, the world's ruler, founder of peace, culture and stability for the great Roman empire:

Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.
Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnalia regna:
Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.[1]

Almost simultaneously with Augustus came the New Order of Christ's Kingdom, the new Virgin Birth, to found a vaster empire than Rome, fraught with significance and salvation to a greater world than Roman emperors dreamt. How could poets but be stirred to sing it in a joy and fervour far excelling the pious patriotism of the Roman poet?

The Christian poet has had a harder task, and needed a higher inspiration, than heathen bards. For the Incarnation is not political or patriotic, but universal in scope and power. It deals not with the doings of an emperor of whom, facilely but with little reality, Vergil could say

deus nobis haec otia fecit;
Namque erit ille mihi semper deus[2]

(a few more "gods" made little difference to pagan Olympus), but with Him who, very God of very God, for our sakes "was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary".

Such a high matter may well be brought into disrepute or disregard if treated of unworthily. Who, then, once more, could hope worthily to express its mystery, its reality, its profundity, its awe?

II. Certainly we should not expect too much in this way of English poets. We cannot claim that our English race (with so large a Saxon strain in its blood) is deeply spiritual or highly imaginative. Yet perhaps, on the whole, considering their limitations, our poets have succeeded better than we might have hoped.

First, as to the exceeding mystery of the Incarnation, he who approaches it must needs do so with an overwhelming sense of the "new power" which it brought into human life and nature. It has been said that the Incarnation was God's answer to the SOS of desperate humanity. The rule of Greek tragedy was that the intervention of *deus ex machina* should not be displayed unless the circumstances demanded it. Well, when all pagan power, philosophy and culture had been fully tried, man found life futile and empty, and could believe in no divinity at all. Matthew Arnold thus describes the world's state:

On that hard pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.

Into that same world was born One, Holy and Perfect, who alone could bring a restoring and saving life to mankind, Himself Saviour, Guide, Redeemer, Friend and saving God.

[1] *Eclogue* iv, 5-7. [2] *Ibid.*, i, 6, 7.

The practical English mind, slow to grasp intellectual theology and the vast implications of the Incarnation, could yet grasp its practical and beneficial power for individuals and mankind, and that "the power of Satan broken is" for all who will lay hold of a stronger Power than his. So William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585-1649) could write of it (the carolling angels are speaking):

Run, shepherds, run, where Bethlem blest appears,
We bring the best of news, be not dismayed;
A Saviour there is born, more old than years,
Amidst the rolling Heaven this Earth who stayed:
A weakling did Him bear, who all upbears;
In a poor cottage nursed, a Virgin Maid,
There He in clothes is wrapt, in manger laid,
To whom too narrow swaddlings are our spheres.
Run, shepherds, run, and solemnize His Birth.
This is that night—no, day, grown great with bliss,
In which the power of Satan broken is.
In Heaven be glory, peace unto the Earth!

About the same time as Drummond, Giles Fletcher was writing his *Christ's Victory in Heaven*, in which he pictured Justice pleading before God for sinful man's punishment. But Mercy, on man's behalf, makes counterplea that since Christ has come to earth in human nature God can hope for his restoration:

He is a path, if any be misled;
  He is a robe, if any naked be;
If any chance to hunger, He is bread;
  If any be a bondman, He is free;
  If any be but weak, how strong is He!
    To dead men, life He is; to sick men, health;
    To blind men, sight; and to the needy, wealth;
A pleasure without loss; a treasure without stealth.

So pleads Mercy. And at her words the poet takes up the tale in words which can hardly be surpassed for joyous intensity:

Who can forget—never to be forgot—
  The time when all the world in slumber lies,
When, like the stars, the singing angels shot
  To earth, and Heaven awaked all his eyes,
  To see another Sun at midnight rise
    On earth? Was never sight of pareil fame!
    For God before man like Himself did frame,
But God Himself now like a man became.

A Child He was, and had not learnt to speak,
  That with His word the world before did make;
His mother's arms Him bore, He was so weak
  That with one hand the vaults of Heaven could shake!
  See how small room my infant Lord doth take,
    Whom all the world is not enough to hold!
    Who of His years, or of His age, hath told?
Never such age was young, never a child so old!

. . . . . .

The angels carolled loud their song of peace;
  The curséd oracles were strucken dumb;
To see their Shepherd, the poor shepherds press,
  To see their King, the kingly sophies come;

And them to guide unto his Master's home,
A star comes dancing up the Orient,
That springs for joy over the strawy tent,
Where gold, to make their Prince a crown, they all present.

There is deep feeling behind this language, as well as poetic imagination. Milton, fifty years later, was not ashamed, in his *Morning of Christ's Nativity*, to borrow something of Fletcher's style and imagery.

"The curséd oracles were strucken dumb." Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poets here followed an old tradition, which treats the pagan deities as having real existence but finding their power fade when Christ was born. Milton, in his Nativity poem (as did Mrs Browning later in her *The Dead Pan*), followed this conception:

The Oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the archéd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathéd spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

Somewhat tediously Milton goes on to deal faithfully with all the heathen crew—Peor, Baalim, Ashtaroth, Hammon, Thamuz, Moloch, Isis, Orus, Anubis, Osiris. We have here (as in Homer and Vergil before him) a poet's love of a long list of sonorous names. This is Milton's ornate Renaissance way of stating simpler biblical truth: "The darkness is past, and the true Light now shineth." He is happier when he lays aside his classical pomposities, and closes with a stanza glorious for its sheer beauty of diction:

But see the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest.
Time is our tedious song should here have ending:
Heaven's youngest-teemèd star
Hath fixed her polished car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending,
And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harnessed Angels sit in order serviceable.

III. Of course Caroline poets (like the Italian masters in their Nativity pictures), in painting the utter helplessness of this sweet Babe at the mercy of a cruel world, are drawing upon an effective *tragic irony*. Tragic irony is defined in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* as the use of words having an inner especially prophetic meaning for an audience unsuspected by the speaker. It is a trick which, simple and familiar as it is, cannot fail to wring the heart which is conscious of beholding innocence destined for unmerited suffering. Take, for instance, the scene in Shakspere's *Henry V* where the camp boy, after wittily castigating the characters of his three scoundrelly masters—Nym, Bardolph and Pistol—declares that he is so ashamed of them that he will, as soon as possible, *leave their service for a better*. But his present task is, with other boys, to guard the

luggage behind the English army: he says "the French might have a good prey of us, if he knew of it; for there is none to guard it but boys". Now the theatre audience has taken to its heart this typically merry Cockney boy. And which of them, knowing that news will shortly come that a French rabble has murdered all the boys, can fail to have a lump in his throat as the little fellow talks of the better service for which he hopes?

This is tragic irony; and tragic irony (though so often camouflaged by the rough and boisterous bawling of carols or by vulgar Christmas cards) always lies, for the intelligent reader, in the poet's stress upon the sweetness and simplicity of the Babe whose path will lead to the Cross. Here is the poignancy (sometimes despised as "sentimentality") which lies behind the Botticelli Nativity pictures. In them a wistful Mother remembers the prophecy of the sword against her own heart, whilst her chubby Infant questions her with spiritually intelligent eyes which as yet cannot see *that* issue.

This tragic irony *may* lie in Robert Herrick's pretty poem (if so, it redeems the mere prettiness) of the "little Saviour" to whom childish presents may give pleasure:

> Tell Him (for good handsell too)
> That thou hast brought a whistle new,
> Made of a clean strait oaten reed,
> To charm His cries (at time of need):
> Tell Him, for coral, thou hast none;
> But if thou hadst, He should have one;
> But poor thou art, and known to be
> Even as moneyless as He.
> Lastly, if thou canst win a kiss
> From those mellifluous lips of His;
> Then never take a second on,
> To spoil the first impression.

Whether Herrick has tragic irony or not, Richard Crashaw certainly has it in his Nativity lines (the words are spoken by the shepherds):

> We saw Thee in Thy balmy nest,
> Young dawn of our eternal day;
> We saw Thine eyes break from their East
> And chase the trembling clouds away.
> We saw Thee, and we blest the sight,
> We saw Thee by Thine own sweet light.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Poor World, said I, what wilt thou do
> To entertain this starry stranger?
> Is this the best thou canst bestow—
> A cold and not too cleanly manger?
> Contend, ye powers of heaven and earth,
> To fit a bed for this huge birth.

Already, in reading, the reader's mind has envisaged the "entertainment" offered by the world to the "starry stranger", and sees a stark Figure stretched upon a Cross or laid in Joseph of Arimathea's rocky "bed". It is an inevitable part of the Christmas message that this Child "came unto his own, *and his own received him not*"—

that He was "conceived of the Holy Ghost by the Virgin Mary, *Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried*".

This tension, lying in all Nativity poems, is not the mere tension between innocence and undeserved suffering. but special tension arising from the particular Person who was willingly offering Himself to pass from unimaginable glory to an unimaginable shame. It is no pretty story of a romantic babe, born in a miraculous way, carolled by encircling angels, and visited by picturesque shepherds, which urges Christian poets to take their lyres and sing. Through English literature, as in the Gospels, you can trace the basic element of *adoration* which is the world's true "entertainment" and welcome to this Child.

That is, for instance, the obvious theme of Robert Southwell's simple *New Prince, New Pomp*:

Behold, a silly, tender Babe,
In freezing winter night,
In homely manger trembling lies,
Alas! a piteous sight.
The inns are full, no man will yield
This little Pilgrim bed;
But forced is He with silly beasts
In crib to shroud His head.
Despise Him not for lying there;
First what He is enquire;
An orient pearl is often found
In depth of dirty mire;
Weigh not His crib, His wooden dish,
Nor beasts that by Him feed;
Weigh not His Mother's poor attire,
Nor Joseph's simple weed.
This stable is a Prince's court,
The crib His chair of state;
The beasts are parcel of His pomp,
The wooden dish His plate.
The persons in that poor attire
His royal liveries wear;
This Prince Himself is come from heaven;
This pomp is prizéd there.[1]

Joseph Beaumont put the same contrast in fewer words:

He who did wear
God's radiant boundless Form
Shrinks Himself here
Into a simple worm.
Heaven's moulded up in earth, Eternity
Grasped in a span of Time doth bounded lie.

All Paradise
Collected in one bud
Doth sweetly rise
From its fair virgin bed,
Omnipotence an infant's shape puts on:
Immensity becomes a little One.[2]

[1] Southwell was a saintly papist priest who (though he took no part in papist intrigues against Elizabeth's life) was often cruelly tortured, and at last executed as a traitor (1595).

[2] Joseph Beaumont (1616-1699), *Christmas Day*.

George MacDonald succinctly brings divine immensity and human infancy together by saying that the Son of God came as "a little thing that made a woman cry".

Perhaps women-poets can best express this mystery, the poignancy of which sometimes makes the contemplation of the Incarnation almost unbearable. Those do their task best who keep closest to scriptural simplicity. What could be simpler than the *In the Midwinter* of Christina Rossetti,[1] whose limpid lucidity almost hides her mastery of style and language?

IV. The power of such verse lies not so much in its literary beauty as in the appeal which it makes to that image of God which is inherent in human nature. "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . And God created man in his own image." Like can answer to like—self-offering to self-offering.

The intellectuality which shrinks from the Incarnation as a "miracle" seems childish before St Augustine's dictum that a miracle is *"non contra maturam sed contra quam nota est natura"*—"not contrary to Nature, but *beyond Nature as far as we know her*".[2] "Miracles" of one age become natural enough as succeeding ages reveal more and more of God's ways of dealing with man. There are powers belonging to God's "nature" which human nature cannot intellectually grasp—as yet. Intellectualism rightly questions and tries to understand; but the key to understanding here is not intellectuality, but that kinship with God which, in some measure, shares His divine generosity, and therefore can open the heart to the completest generosity humanity can know. To God, who is love, such generosity is wholly "natural". Man may fail to see God's goodness in the Incarnation, but he has failed to find any better way by which He could reveal His heart to us. "What could have been done", He may well ask us, "more in my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" If man will not accept this, what more can God offer him? If he sees not God here, in what can he ever hope to find Him?

The acceptance of the Incarnation by such intuition does not mean that the Incarnation affronts the intellect. It is not profundity, but rather poverty, of thought which is shy of finding God in the greatest events of His world. It was Francis Bacon, pioneer of English scientific thinking, who wrote that "he had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind".

Sertillanges, writing of Jesus Christ, once said: *"Il pouvait souligner de miracles chacune de ses affirmations."* We can but add that God could not more clearly and emphatically underline His affirmations of His love for man than by the Incarnation. "God *so* loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son." May we not dare to say that God recognizes thus His obligation to help to the uttermost man whom He has, through the gift of free-will, created so uncertain of development?

When man responds wholeheartedly to this divine generosity he becomes indeed a new man. The personal experience of God's love

[1] See *English Hymnal*, No. 25. [2] *De Civitate Dei*, XXI, viii, 2.

is an experience which is deeper and more purging than any other. In his *Twentieth-Century Literature 1901-1940* A. C. Ward states that Lascelles Abercrombie has maintained that "the function of poetry is the translation into language (and the communication) of unusually intense and vivid experience".[1]

Each nation must be thankful for such of its poets as have been gifted with the power to express their experience of God's love in the Incarnation.

"Happy, thrice happy are they", cried Thomas Nashe, in *The Unfortunate Traveller*, "whom God hath doubled His spirit upon, and given a double soul unto to be Poets." And we English may recognize with intense gratitude "the double soul" of those of our poets who have taught us to bow our hard hearts and stiff knees before the royalty of that Child who is still the only hope for human progress and peace.

G. Lacey May.

The Things which are Cæsar's—II

Just as Jehovah calls the Jews from among the other nations, so Christ calls the Apostles out from other individuals, engaged in lay activities like fishing and tax-collecting. This time, however, their task is to go out among others and preach the coming of the Kingdom of God, and after His death and resurrection to preach the Risen Lord and to administer His sacraments to the faithful.

While the priestly function of the Jewish nation had been exercised not by any specifically religious acts or preaching to the Gentiles, but by their history as a people, the gradual and continuous development among them of the consciousness that God is not to be manipulated by magic nor possessed by reason, but is a Father who loves His children even when they sin, for the Apostles and their successors the history of religion is ended and their function is to be the instrument by which the truths necessary to salvation, and the means of grace entrusted to them by Christ, are preserved and transmitted to the end of time. The Incarnation does not put an end to the history of the world but only to the history of religion, and the priest is then in the world yet detached from the historical order as a witness that this is so. Thus, while all lay occupations continue to exhibit historical development both for the individual during his lifetime and from one generation to the next, so that we may continue to speak of the history of art, science, law, etc., or of the development of an artist's work or a scientist's ideas, from the moment that a priest is ordained he ceases to have a history. Every priest is a witness in his time and place to the fact that the events which redeem history have already occurred once and for all. The Gospel he preaches, the sacraments he administers are already there, unchanged by any subsequent historical events.

Again, since a priest is only an instrument, in addition to renounc-

[1] In *The Idea of Great Poetry*, ch. i.

ing a history he renounces all personal relations to others. When he preaches the Gospel, it is the Gospel itself, not his skill in preaching it, which has authority; when he administers Holy Communion, it is the Blessed Sacrament that the communicant encounters, not him; when he absolves the penitent in the confessional, it is not a personal act, as when one person forgives another, but God making use of his tongue.

Thus, while of any man practising a lay vocation like medicine or law it is possible to say that he is a good doctor or a bad or a better or a worse lawyer than another lawyer, of a priest it is possible to say only that he is one, *i.e.* that he has been ordained. Like some mass-produced utensil, any priest is interchangeable with any other. While there may be only one surgeon in the world who can perform the operation which can save my life, the most ignorant country curé can absolve me of a deadly sin.

The argument for a celibate priesthood is not based on any theory that virginity is intrinsically morally superior to marriage, but on the fact that in marriage two individuals have a unique relation to each other and a priest *qua* priest has no relation to others but is only a means to a relation between them and God. Strictly speaking, a priest does not even have neighbours, or one could put it differently and say that whereas the needs which a layman satisfies are temporal needs, so that any individual, Christian or non-Christian, whose needs he is in a position to satisfy is his neighbour, a priest is a neighbour only to Christians. Even if he is a missionary preaching to the heathen he becomes related to them only if and when they recognize the need for the Word of God and the sacraments, which he is the means of satisfying.

If the Apostles were not called by Christ on the basis of exceptional natural gifts, neither were they called because they were better than others. If they ended their lives as saints, that is another matter; they began as Apostles. It must not be forgotten that Judas who betrayed Christ and hanged himself was none the less an Apostle and received the same commission as the others. Sanctity is not a specific calling in the world. It is, no doubt, commanded and offered to us all, laity and priests alike, and refused by all but a very few through lack of faith. After considerable controversy the Early Church wisely established the principle that the efficacy of a priest is independent of his moral character. In judging a layman we make a distinction between his moral character and his ability at his job, but this distinction is never absolute. In relation to any lay activity there are certain traits of character which are relevant and others which are not—*e.g.*, it does not matter very much if a soldier is a heavy drinker, but it matters a great deal if he is a coward; a bank manager may be a jealous man if he likes, but he must not be dishonest. In the case of a priest, on the other hand, no moral failing is more or less relevant to his office than another, so that we must either make the distinction between the man and the office absolute or make the absurd and, considering our own sinfulness, impious demand that no one shall officiate as a priest who is not a saint. The

religious authority of the priest is an authority of office only; he is the medium *through* which men receive divine grace: we have no right to demand that in addition he shall have the religious authority of the saint so that we confront God *in* his person.

In the case of both lay vocations and the vocation of the priest, the decisive question for the prospective candidate is "Is my belief that this is to become my vocation real or fantastic?"

In the case of lay vocations, this question is comparatively easy to answer, since it depends on the presence or absence of a natural gift and temperament. The famous brain surgeon Dr Cushing relates how, when an excellent student came to consult him about whether or not he should become a surgeon, he settled the matter in the negative by asking one question: "Do you enjoy the sensation of cutting through flesh with a knife?"

This is right and proper in relation to a lay activity, for there natural ability and pleasure in exercising it go hand in hand, but in the case of a vocation to the priesthood, where it is a matter of being called not by one's gift but by God directly, what human test could ever be devised to prove or disprove it? If God has indeed called a man, he cannot, any more than Abraham or Moses or Jacob or the Apostles, excuse himself on the ground of his incapacity.

A shrewd judge of men may suspect that in such and such a candidate for Holy Orders the vocation is spurious, not real, and have a nine to one chance of being right, but the single chance of being wrong remains. It might be wise practically to discourage candidates from entering the priesthood before they have had some experience in a lay occupation. The one fatal course for the Church to take is to play safe and, using the standards of this world, accept only the "healthy" and the "normal". I have heard, for example, that one Protestant denomination puts all its candidates through a series of psychological tests to eliminate the "maladjusted". One cannot help wondering how St Paul or St Augustine or St Francis would have scored on such a test.

If discouragement and delay seem the only possible human test, this is because the spiritual danger in which the priest always stands is one with which psychology is not equipped to deal.[1] In the case of the layman there are three factors in the situation, God, his gift, and his ego; in the case of the priest only two, God and his ego. The layman, an author let us say, may forget that his gift comes from God, but in that case he starts to idolize his gift, not himself; when he says "I wrote that" he cannot ever forget that he means "My gift wrote that." If a priest, on the other hand, forgets God he is left only with his ego, so that when he says "*Ego te absolvo*" he really thinks that he is God.

Whenever and wherever the Church wields temporal power and exerts a cultural influence the priest discharges lay functions as well

[1] In doubtful cases, tossing a coin would seem to be the only procedure for which there is apostolic authority. See Acts i, 23-26.

as his own. Thus in the Middle Ages the priesthood was responsible for practically all of the things of Cæsar but agriculture, commerce, and war; up to the end of the nineteenth century in the country districts of most countries, Catholic and Protestant, the local priest or minister was the one permanent resident with some degree of learning and manners; and in the future as in the past it is probable that theology will continue to be the work of priests, though, strictly speaking, it is, as distinct from dogma, a lay activity, for to say that someone is a good or a bad theologian is quite different from saying that he is orthodox or heretical. But to-day in many countries, among them the U.S., the general spread of education among the laity has considerably changed the whole situation and, provided that those of the laity who profess and call themselves Christians do their duty, the change can be of advantage to the mission of the Church. Catholicism and Protestantism have shown the two opposite kinds of temptation which a mixed called runs. In Catholicism, where the uniqueness of the priestly vocation has been safeguarded, the danger has been an improper extension of the dogmatic principle to lay affairs. When a man acts or judges as a layman, it is his act, the exercise of his natural gifts of body and mind which are limited and the movement of his will which, but for grace, is corrupt: everything he does and says is fallible and open to discussion and the highest praise we can give him is that he is doing his best; but the acts of a priest are not his but God's and, therefore, to a Christian, infallible. Whenever a priest has also to function as a layman, therefore, he is tempted to claim for his lay judgment the infallibility which belongs to his priestly acts alone. In Protestantism, on the other hand, it is the layman's engagement in the historical order which has improperly extended itself into the historically detached or completed function of the priest and the Christian faith has been perverted into an ideology conforming to the spirit of the times.

At this point, perhaps, we should mention a third activity, the prophetic, because it belongs neither to the laity nor to the priesthood. A prophet is any individual who at one moment or from time to time is inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak. While the priest is called by God and the layman by his gift, the prophet is not called at all, for his ego is, as it were, by-passed; it is meaningless for a man to say "I am a prophet"; it is only the hearers who can recognize the Holy Spirit speaking through him and say "At this moment he is a prophet."

> Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born . . . them speak the wonderful works of God.

Whenever a man speaks and the effect on his hearers is to wake them to repentance or to the praise of God, that man is a prophet. What he consciously thinks he is doing is irrelevant. He may think he is talking atheism, but if the Christian ear hears the tongue of God saying "Thus saith the Lord," he is a prophet.

The laity, then, inherit the role of the Gentiles, *i.e.* the responsibility for the natural and historical order. While it may be said that there would never have been a chosen people or a priesthood but for the Fall, the task entrusted to the laity is that entrusted to Adam in the garden of Eden. It is their task by virtue of the nature with which God endowed man at his creation and of which, despite the Fall and the certainty that, without divine grace, he would use it perversely, God did not deprive him. The difference between the Gentiles and the laity is defined by Christ in the famous words: "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's." Hitherto the Gentiles had thought of their cultural task as being also a religious task. Henceforth culture and religion were to be seen as distinct, since religion as a natural quest for God by man was finished. The text has often been quoted and rightly against the idolatrous pretensions of the state. The Christian layman should also remember that it asserts that there is no such thing as Christian politics, or a Christian art, or a Christian science, any more than there is a Christian diet. There is only politics, or art, or science, which are natural activities concerned with the natural and historical man. The standards of efficacy, beauty and truth, by which they are measured, are valid irrespective of faith, but the Christian layman is conscious of exercising his natural gifts in the presence of God.

It may be said of the vocation of the priesthood that it is intrinsically serious; of all lay vocations it may be said that they are in themselves frivolous; for what a layman should do is answerable in terms of his individual gifts and his particular historical situation. Since these conditions are different for every individual, since gifts are greater or less, the taking seriously of a lay vocation in itself would mean that God loved some more than others. The belief that God is love involves the conclusion that what is serious must be something which is the same in all men, namely their free-will. What is serious for the layman is not his occupation, to which, if it be the right occupation for him, natural interest will make him devote himself, but the intention of his will, which is equally difficult for all men, gifted or ungifted, to love God and his neighbour as himself. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass." Others hear the tongues of men and angels and profit from it, but as far as I am concerned my action is a tinkling cymbal, valueless before God. Vice versa, I may fail completely at what I undertake, and even by my failure do my neighbours harm, but if I have honestly intended good, God will judge my intention, not the result.

The Christian layman is a member of two communities—the Church, which includes the souls of all the faithful departed, living, and to be born, and the historical community of his neighbours. The pattern of relationships that this involves for him, and the problems involved, vary, of course, with his time and place, and it is possible to speak only of what one knows by direct experience.

For example, one can say of the layman in the U.S. to-day:

1. That it is probable that within that sphere of the temporal where his work lies he can speak with some authority, a greater authority, probably, than that of the priest whose church he attends.
2. Most of his neighbours are probably not professing Christians, or, if they are, belong to some other denomination.

The particular problem he faces to-day, therefore, is the lack of overlap between the two communities, and his minority position in the second.

His constant association with non-Christian neighbours, who, if he is honest, he is bound to admit are often more gifted and nicer than he, is a temptation, if he is one kind of man, to lose interest in the Christian faith and adopt, almost unconsciously, non-Christian beliefs. If he is another kind of man, the temptation is to become conceited about his minority position and think of himself as one of the superior élite. Because of these dangers there has probably never been a time when it was more necessary for the layman to be theologically educated, to know what the dogmas of the Church are, and how they relate to his professional life.

Further, the scandal of Church disunity, the tragedy that the body of Christ is broken in pieces, is becoming more and more a scandal to the laity. If ecumenicity is ever to be achieved, it will have to start from the intention of the laity that it shall, because it is the laity, not the clergy, who meet those of other Christian communions as neighbours. Mutual love and sympathy have to precede theological agreement; otherwise what are cultural misunderstandings and hostilities will defeat the possibility of agreement before discussion begins.

When the Christian layman prays "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" he implies that the coming of the Kingdom is to be God's decision, not his. He is not to forget, first, that no man can choose when and where he is born and, secondly, that the act of faith is a free act. The Christian creed begins in the first person singular. It is every man's natural right as God made him to refuse grace and be damned. The ultimate goal of achievement in the historical order which the layman can imagine is not a world in which all men are necessarily Christians and it is impossible to sin—even in heaven some angels fell—but a world in which faith in Christ or the rejection of Christ, the choice of loving or not loving, was for every individual a free act of conscious choice for which he would be and know himself to be responsible.

A Christian is at once commanded to accept his creatureliness, both natural and historical, not to attempt to escape into a fantastic world untrammelled by the realities of space and time, and forbidden to make an idol of nature or history. It might be said that for him only two temporal categories are significant, the present instant and eternity. The present instant is, of course, the result of the past; the command to accept this result exactly as it is without

bowdlerization would be impossible but for the promise that our sins can be forgiven, for the burden of guilt for one's own sins and of resentment for the sins of others which have made the present instant what it is would be intolerable.

Similarly, the present instant is creating the future, and it is impossible to act now without some faith which makes action meaningful so that the actor must put his faith either in an idol, his reason, his power, the wave of the future, etc., or in the living Christ.

Apart from the self-love which either fears to lose by change or hopes to gain, the besetting temptations for the Christian layman in relation to the evils of the historical order with which it is his duty to deal are laziness and impatience.

Laziness acknowledges the relation of the present to the past but ignores its relation to the future; impatience acknowledges its relation to the future but ignores its relation to the past; neither the lazy nor the impatient man, that is, accepts the present instant in its full reality and so cannot love his neighbour completely.

In our age it is impatience, perhaps, which is the more characteristic temptation, partly because the historical situation is rather desperate, but mainly because for us the problem of faith is not of lapsing into a childish magical conception of God but of despair, of believing that God has abandoned us. "Trust in God and take short views", wrote Sidney Smith. In mid-Victorian England this may have had too Whiggish a ring to be sound advice, but as a motto for the laity in 1950 I cannot imagine a better one nor a more terrifying.

W. H. Auden.

(*Concluded*)

Creation and the Church

The church of God is in tatters but not in rags. Such is the real significance of schism. Parts are rent asunder in irregularly torn pieces and hang loosely from the unity of the whole garment. It may appear at first sight that the Christian body is torn into utterly separated pieces, into quite independent rags, but this is not so. All Christians would probably agree that the church is dependent on Christ Himself. Those who lay least importance upon the church do so in the belief that Christ Himself attached no importance to it. And those who stress it most do so in the belief that He did so. The church is His Body[1] (Rom. xii, 5, etc.) and, whatever this implies, we cannot think of it apart from Him. But Christ is not independent of creation, as I have tried to show in a previous article.[2] He is both the Firstborn and the Fulfiller of all created things (Col. i, 15, 17, etc.). This, as I hinted, must have bearing upon our notions of the church and the eucharist. Here I want to suggest that the church, while flowing from Christ, is really of creation. If this is true it will have direct and important bearing upon the form and function of

[1] "The organic instrument of Christ's Personality" (Dodd, *Romans*, p. 194).
[2] Theology, Vol. LII, pp. 403 ff.

the church in the world, and upon the real meaning of its unity and catholicity. Much discussion about the church's unity, or lack of it, and of its catholicity seems to assume that these are man-made aspects of it. They are not, and possibly because we have neglected creation we have lost sight of the fact, not that the church is divine, but that its unity and catholicity are divinely created marks of the church.

Strictly speaking our Lord did not found the church. It is the outcome and development of the *qahal* of the O.T. The gathering of God's chosen people was drastically changed—renewed—by the new life and revelation through Jesus Christ. Though it is probable that Israel never realized the sense of the *ecclesia*, as Christianity has, it is from the *qahal* in the O.T. we must start. There the "holy nation" had a more political than ecclesiastical significance. As we might say to-day, Erastianism completely obscures the reason and purpose of God's *qahal*. St Peter sees the Christian church as the true chosen generation, royal priesthood (ii, 9), now made perfect in Christ. Before Christ the chosen generation, etc., were not a people of God in the true sense, now in Christ they are, for they have obtained mercy (ii, 10).[1] The church is the new (or, better, "renewed") Israel. In one sense the divine conception of Israel had existed with God "before Abraham", from the beginning.[2] Israel nevertheless did realize that they as a peculiar people had been created by God. "The Creator of the ends of the earth and all things" (Isa. xl, 28) is also the Creator of Israel, the *qahal* (Isa. xliii, 1, 15; Ps. xcv, 6 and c, 3; and cp. Deut. xxxii, 6). Possibly it is best to interpret "Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker" in the double sense, individually and physically as men[3] and collectively as a church, for each interpretation is complementary, rather than antithetical, to the other. God has not made men to be merely individual physical organisms, He has made them for holy fellowship; yet the physical aspect of man cannot be excluded from this holy fellowship.

In the N.T. Colossians and Ephesians[4] are the most important books so far as the doctrine of the church is concerned. After setting forth Christ's Lordship of creation (Col. i, 15-17) Paul continues: "And he is the head[5] of the body, the church. . . ." Radford[6] sees here a break of thought, a change from one subject to another, and he justifies this by complete dualism, and appealing to the doctrine of the newness in Christ (2 Cor. v, 17, etc.). But this idea of "newness" is a difference, a freshness but not a direct contrast. "Renewing" (as, *e.g.*, 2 Cor. iv, 16) conveys a better idea of the newness found in Christ. Moule is just as dualistic in saying[7] "The Head of

[1] Cp. also Hos. i and ii; Rom. ix, 25 ff.

[2] See Milner-White in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, p. 326; Bethune-Baker, *Early History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 370.

[3] As, *e.g.*, in Ps. cxix, 73 and cxxxix, 14-15.

[4] While these two epistles cover very similar grounds, there is a difference of emphasis. Colossians is more concerned with Christ's relationship to God and creation, Ephesians with His relationship to the church.

[5] Christ as Head combines the twin ideas of (*a*) sovereign supremacy and (*b*) source of life and energy. Personality and power merge into one.

[6] *Colossians*, p. 178. [7] *Colossians*, p. 81.

Nature is the Head of Grace; the Person is one, the operations analogous though differing." How do they differ? Neither Paul nor the commentators explain. Paul, as a matter of fact, continues that there is no difference. The fulness (*pleroma*) dwelling in Christ includes both creation and the church as one (Col. i, 19). Neither creation nor the church, apart from each other, can express the fulness of Christ. *Pleroma*[1] is the all-embracing plenitude, the copiousness which can neither exclude anything nor have divisions within itself. Lightfoot,[2] unlike Radford and Moule, stresses the link between the Head of creation and the Head of the church. He points out that the "and" introducing v. 18 is emphatic and is meant to connect up with the "and" introducing v. 17. The Creator of the world *is* the Head of the church. Over this conflict will arise only for heretical teachers.

In Ephesians the church is "the fulness of him that filleth all" (i, 23). This fulness is creation, the "gathering together in one all things in Christ . . ." (i, 10), or to "sum up all things", as in the R.V.[3] This gathering up in Christ and the church had been intended by God from the beginning as part of the original plan of creation (i, 4; cp. 2 Tim. i, 9). Later, Paul's teaching of the unity of the church rests upon the unity of all creation:[4] "One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in (you) all" (iv, 5-6). The "you" in the A.V. does not occur in some of the best Greek MSS and is omitted in the R.V. His appeal is not to all humanity, but to all creation. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, because there is *one* Creator creating *one* creation. Such is the form of the church; Paul also dwells upon its function. Any serious study of created things must include not only their form and function but the correlation between these. The church's *function* is to "make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things (by Jesus Christ): to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (iii, 9-10). God has so designed the church as to be the means whereby the secret of all creation is made known to the faithful. This was the purpose of the Incarnation itself (iii, 11). In the church, through Christ, the meaning of all creation is revealed. It is impossible here to separate the significance of creation and of revelation. In particular the church has the function of revealing to man what man really is and what perfection he is capable of becoming (iv, 13) not only in the future life (as in Phil. iii, 11) but here and now in this life. It is often overlooked that besides revealing to us true divinity, Christ also revealed true humanity.[5] That is what man is, if only he

[1] See on the word *pleroma* the various commentaries, particularly Lightfoot's (pp. 257 ff.) and Radford's (p. 183).

[2] *Colossians*, pp. 156-7.

[3] Compare the instructive diagram on this in Dodd's *Romans*, p. 87.

[4] Moule (*Ephesians*, p. 106) dismisses this idea as remote, yet it is precisely Paul's point.

[5] See Gore's *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 142 ff.

will become it by "looking unto Jesus". "Creation *is* a grace"[1] of revelation. The Incarnation itself was a revelation given from within creation, and it was given to the church rather than to the world at large; so the church reveals the divine mystery from inside creation. The subtlety of God's creative wisdom and word is centred in Christ and manifest in the church. The oneness or Creator-creation relationship is found, or should be found, in the perfect church, as all men are called out of, but not away from, creation to adore the Creator.

Admittedly all this is difficult; it is "more true than plain", as Hooker[2] said of the Incarnation. The real substance of what the church is has always to be apprehended by faith rather than sight. Many people either have false ideas about creation or dismiss it as having no religious significance. But the divine act of creation is fundamental to all biblical teaching. Everything depends on God being the Creator. The first verse of the scriptures is the one great assumption of the entire Bible, which our Lord constantly is affirming in His own gospel. Man is subject to creation and to God; to the *word* of God in its double significance of creative action and utterance. In the O.T., as indeed in the N.T., man is "flesh" sharing the *nephesh* (life, soul, etc.) with the cattle, even with the soil itself; he is always an animated body rather than an incarnate soul.[3] The biblical distinction is between man (even the man of God) and God Himself, not between man and the rest of creation. Man-in-the-church is still an animal of creation. To be "born again"[4] is not some mystical obstetric abracadabra; it is learning to see that birth is more than a physical event and appreciating that behind visible physical birth there is the invisible, sacramental, creative action of God. Perhaps not till we are born into the church itself[5] are we able to appreciate the purpose of human existence in the sense in which Israel (old and new) was, and is, intended to understand it.

We shall always fail to understand creation, as the Bible understands it, if we use the terms "natural" and "supernatural", which at their best are ambiguous and at their worst frankly misleading. The only possible division of creation for faith is *visible* and *invisible*, as in the Nicene Creed. It is just as important to believe in the visible as in the invisible. To acknowledge, say, spinach (which I happen to see from my window) as the work of God's hand is as much an act of faith, and just as important, as to believe in the invisible realities of love and hope and salvation.

Physics, biology as well as theology (as now understood) each has an equally important role to play in elucidating the mysteries of creation. Some modern philosophers insist upon a theistic attitude towards creation.[6] Their ideas may not be fully biblical or Christian, yet they say nothing which is inconsistent with the fully Christian

[1] Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, p. 54. [2] *Eccl. Pol.* V, lii, 1.
[3] Elmslie, *How Came Our Faith*, p. 123.
[4] Better, possibly, born "from above" or "of God" (cp. John i, 13). It could be "from the beginning", but this makes little sense. "Anew", as in R.V. and Knox, is too dualistic.
[5] Cp. Gal. iv, 26 and Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.* V, l, 1.
[6] Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature*, p. 170 *et passim.*

and sacramental view of the universe. The church as a whole must not keep aloof from cosmological thinking so long as she is convinced that creation has anything to do with her creeds (and what Christians would really deny this?). Cosmology links up with history, as Collingwood shows,[1] and both these must be taken up into theology. This is more urgent when we see Christ and the church giving us specific revelation by attaching themselves to creation. For both, mysteriously, are revelations *of* creation by being incarnate *with* it. Christian theology must "consider the lilies" in the light of modern thought. The N.T. doctrine of Christ, which includes the church too, forces us to do this. The real meaning of catholicity—a misused and misunderstood word—makes the lilies (our Lord's example of all creation) as important for the church as God and men. Universality is not the whole of catholicity; it is a wholeness, an entirety, an ampleness, a reflection of the fulness of Christ which, as we saw above, must include creation. Catholicity is all men and all nations; yet it is much more, it is the "*all* in all" (Eph. i, 23; Col. iii, 11), all *things*, the whole of creation everywhere. Probably no one part of the church to-day is properly entitled to claim to be "catholic" in its strict sense. The church to-day appears to be so divided that no one part may claim to be the *whole* body. Yet can Christ be divided? It is interesting to notice that where most people would have written *church*, Paul deliberately says *Christ* (1 Cor. i, 13). Here, surely, is a touch of sarcasm. What appears to be a division over such things as ministries (which then, as now, were sometimes mistaken for doctrines of the church itself) is a divison of the person of Christ. To Paul this is an absurd impossibility: Christ cannot be divided.[2] The contentions to which he refers arise from an overemphasis on the ministries of himself, Apollos and Cephas. Underneath, beyond these ministries there is unity which is indestructible.

We hear a great deal to-day of the disunion of the church and the vain efforts at reunion. Against all this it is indeed a sobering thought that perhaps the whole church is not completely divided as is often supposed. Our real task may be not to reunite a divided church, so much as to discover and make visible a unity, an eternal and unbreakable unity, which is already there in all parts of the church. The original idea of schism bears this out; according to definitions given in various forms by Augustine and other fathers, it has reference to outward separations rather than inward divergences of belief.[3] Schism is caused by disputes of church form and order, not by fundamentals of the church's being. The Bible, creeds, sacraments and ministries are essential means of church form and order, but they are only *means* whereby the worshipping faithful render wor-

[1] Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature*, p. 176.

[2] "So entirely is the Church one with her Lord that to divide the one is to divide the other. Since there cannot be a divided Christ, there is no place for a divided church; such a thing is a [standing] contradiction to the unity of the Lord's Person . . . [this] appears strange only because the doctrine of Christ's union with His Church is so little grasped . . . a great fact upon which arguments could be built and appeals based" (Goudge, *1 Corinthians*, p. 6).

[3] See *Oxford Dictionary*.

ship. Below all these seems to lie the church's root and very being in creation, the Body perfectly reflecting Christ Himself, in which "all things consist"—the ingathering where all creation and all history[1] find eternal significance amid a temporal order. Besides our present interdenominational talks—which must always be supported by our prayers—is it not time that each part of the church took its own particular form of doctrine a little deeper and justified itself as the true Body of Christ by relating it to creation? It would be idle here to anticipate the result of this. It might be that perfect unity and concord might be reached on the significance of creation to Christ and the church, which yet did not prove to be of any assistance in regaining our outward unity. On the other hand the importance of this one common basis to Christian faith might be found to be, by the whole church, the one and only point from which unity and reunion might truly be made visible to the whole world.

Creation has at least one object-lesson for the fully catholic church. While it displays a unity, its great diversity rules out all ideas of uniformity. In creation, as in the church, these must never be confused. Visible unity may, and indeed must, coexist with diversity in many things. The church should not, indeed cannot, impose upon the diversity of humanity ("all sorts and conditions of men") a rigid uniformity of worship. It is *harmony*, rather than unity, of thought and feeling which ought to flow from the "inner", and perhaps hidden, unity of the church.[2] Every type of worship will be necessary in the one true church—the grandeur of high mass, the simplicity of Quaker silence and all that lies between. Underneath such diverse forms of worship and forms in which the gospel is presented lies the unity of faith in One Creator in and through one creation. The word and sacrament will be identical, their proclamation and administration will differ. Is it because all parts of the church have neglected, not the word and sacrament, but creation itself that she is now torn asunder? It seems at any rate that creation holds us together, or is capable of doing so, in tatters, and prevents us from being disjointed rags of a garment which ought to appear whole and seamless.

W. S. Boycott.

Journalese and Pulpitese

"The manner in which Epictetus, Montaigne, and Salomon de Tultie wrote is the most usual, the most suggestive, the best remembered, and the oftenest quoted; because it is entirely composed of thoughts born from the common talk of life."—Pascal, *Pensées*, No. 18.

[1] The close connection between creation and history comes out in Knox's translation of Eph. i, 9 and 10: "It was his loving design, centred in Christ, to give *history* its fulfilment by resuming everything in him, all that is in heaven, all that is on earth summed up in him."

Directly creation functions it usually merges into history. *E.g.*, the cat is a created being, the mouse is a created being; the cat and mouse encounter, though of creation, is historic in character.

[2] See Goudge, *1 Corinthians*, p. 8.

"The practice of religious observances"—so the article began—"is essential to the completeness of the Christian life." I think the writer meant "You can't be a Christian, in any full sense of the word, unless you go to church." It went on: "But experience teaches us that it is all too easy to fulfil the outward obligations of church membership and come short of that vital personal religion which alone is the proof of the validity of a man's faith." In other words, "his religion can only too easily be taken for granted". But why didn't he say so, if that was what he meant?

I. The one is the sort of thing you read in books and hear in church. It is not so much English as Journalese or Pulpitese—good Journalese, perhaps, especially if intelligently read, but it is not the way we talk to one another. It is the kind of English people expect in sermons and can understand, but which they do not listen to and which makes little impression on them. You feel the difference directly you read the same thing written in the ordinary English of conversation. It is not jargon, or bad English, such as William Nichols, D.D., used in his *Paraphrase of the Book of Common Prayer* when in 1712 he "used such plainness of language as might be understood by the ordinary readers" of the twenty-third psalm:

> He has instated me in a very happy Condition of Life wherein my Circumstances resemble the feeding of Cattle in a fruitful green Pasture, where, having fed themselves to the full with the delicious Herbage, they are led to water into a clear, and cool, and comfortable Stream.

So, in training the clergy to read from the pulpit, it has been found to be a good plan to take a piece of really good journalism such as, for instance, one of those excellent little articles published every Saturday morning in *The Times* newspaper, and to make a translation of it into the ordinary English of conversation, to practise on as if to a real congregation. When this was done the effect was felt at once; felt in the attitude of the speaker who ceased automatically to be tied to his manuscript, who began to look up at his imaginary congregation, and read with marked intelligence. The more natural English, with its vocabulary learned in conversation, in the less stilted delivery of the shorter sentences and the freer phrasing of them, was at once noticeable. But the most valuable of all was the feeling the student got that he was interpreting his own words, and was succeeding in "getting them over".

II. This was the way Plato began. His aim was to "bring Philosophy down from Heaven to dwell among men". He was accused of talking about cooks and carpenters first before he summarized his ideas in abstract terms. He considered the Mrs Linnets of his day who had, as George Eliot tells us, their own methods of reading religious biography. It will be remembered that where she saw a predominance of such words as Zion, the River of Life, and notes of exclamation she passed on quickly to the end to see what the good man died of and, in particular, whether his legs used to swell as her own did sometimes. By this method she "made rapid progress through a large number of volumes in the Library". So Plato framed his treatises in conversational form and built up a style which, for

lucidity and force, has seldom if ever been surpassed in philosophical writing.

The tradition of the pulpit is behind such a work as *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Its language is sternly biblical, built up by a succession of Puritan preachers, using the speech of the people, with a free personification of virtues and vices in the chief characters of the story as Bunyan saw them in the people he met and in the talk he heard in everyday life all round him.

"We are reminded of Bunyan", wrote Mr L. C. Knights in a review of Dr F. E. Hutchinson's *The Works of George Herbert*, "in whose blend of Biblical language and native idiom the august events of the Bible seem to be transacted in a familiar world, and the humble doings of every day are placed in a context that reveals how momentous they are."

For that is the merit of George Herbert's style, and what makes him more characteristically English even than Bunyan. Though in form he is more varied and elaborate, his vocabulary is simple, is that of a cultured gentleman. No word in his *The Priest to the Temple* is strange to the reader. It is based on the phrases of the Bible. It, like the diction of Plato, is built upon the common speech of men.

> This is the skill, and doubtless the Holy Scripture intends thus much, when it condescends to the naming of a plough, a hatchet, a bushell, leaven, boyes piping and dancing; showing that things in ordinary use are not only to serve in the way of drudgery, but to be washed and cleansed and served for lights even of Heavenly Truths.

As Dr Hutchinson says:

> Few English poets have been able to use the plain words of ordinary speech with a greater effect of simple dignity than Herbert. From Donne he had learned the use of the conversational tone which establishes an intimacy between poet and reader; and when his poems are read aloud, the emphasis falls easily on the natural order of the speaking idiom.

This is what in the pulpit is called "being natural". It is, of course, being highly artificial as befits verses written with such art. I remember once being in St John's Church in Red Lion Square when Dr J. N. Figgis was preaching and quoted Herbert's *The Pulley*, beginning with the words "When God at first made man". I had, of course, read them before, but they had made no impression on me. As he read them their strong simplicity held me. Since then they have been one of my favourite passages for practice in reading from the pulpit. And students who have been reading as if their words mean nothing suddenly find themselves reading with intelligence and meaning.

III. How can the clergy learn to write simple English? And how can they train themselves to speak it well? Much can be done by reading the classics of our native tongue and by reading them aloud. It is useful to take sermons of others and to deliver them in an empty church for practice. It is extraordinary how much better students read poetry than they do prose. The lilt of scansion seems to help them to let themselves go. The choice of the right word makes them

naturally articulate with vigour and precision. It is not much good to dwell on faults or to cite wrong interpretations as "awful warnings". You do not cure bad writing by making people read jargon to point out why it is wrong. That is a common mistake made in school teaching. There is too much poor English heard already in the pulpit. To familiarize men with faults is almost certain to make them reproduce them in their own writing. The art of speech must be learned chiefly in answering questions. Good English must be based on conversation. Otherwise people easily get into the way of hearing and not listening.

We should always make it our practice to talk our best. Dr Johnson once told Sir Joshua Reynolds that "he had early laid it down as a fixed rule to do his best on every occasion, and in every company". In his case it may have led to pomposity, as when saying of Sheridan's *Rehearsal* "It has not wit enough to keep it sweet", he "caught himself and pronounced a more round sentence", saying "It has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction"; but it was in his daily conversation that he learned to speak tersely and directly. He became pompous at times, but it was his concreteness of thought that gave his style its strength. It was by discussion that he learned to think of style and the part played by sound in thought. In conversation we soon find out if we have not made ourselves understood.

And finally, we should learn to hear as we read. The custom of reading aloud has been neglected in our generation, though its place has been taken by broadcasting. The separation of words from sound in song has been a great loss, and much poetry is merely read by the eye to-day. It is prose arranged in a pattern or "displayed". The loss in artistry of speech is serious, and nowhere is it more serious than in preaching and in the pulpit.

†C. F. Rogers.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

The Rev. G. Lacey May edited the volume of *English Religious Verse* in Dent's Everyman's Library.

Mr Boycott is a farmer and a Lay Reader. He contributed articles to Theology in February, 1948, and in December, 1949.

The late Rev. C. F. Rogers was Professor of Pastoral Theology at King's College, London, from 1919 to 1932.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE KING'S EVIL

To the Editor of Theology.

Sir,

In his article on "Dr Johnson and the Prayer Book" the Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, following, apparently, Bloch's *Les Rois Thaumaturges*, states that the practice of touching for the King's Evil was dropped by James I. There is, however, strong evi-

dence to suggest that he did in fact continue the traditional ceremony. Gardiner in his *History of England* (vol. i, p. 152) shows that in September, 1603, James, though with reluctance, did perform a healing on the advice of his English counsellors. That he did from time to time renew the ancient usage is indicated by two warrants among the State Papers. On April 10, 1611, a warrant was issued to pay £120 to the Wardens of the Mint for providing gold for angels, the gold coins suspended from the neck of the sick person during the ceremony of touching for the Evil (*Cal. State Papers Dom.* 1611-18, p. 23). A similar warrant was issued in September, 1624, to the Wardens "to cause as many angels of gold to be coined as shall be required by the Keeper of the Privy Purse, for his Majesty's use in healing the King's Evil" (*Cal. State Papers Dom.* 1623-25, p. 340).

In view of this evidence it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that James's initial reluctance disappeared and that the ceremony came to be regarded in his reign as a matter of course.

Yours faithfully,

IVAN ROOTS.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF SOUTH WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE.
October 20, 1950.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE WORDS AND WORKS OF JESUS. By A. M. Hunter. S.C.M. Press. 12s. 6d.

Finding that his divinity students had no "life" of Jesus to meet their needs, Dr Hunter has set out to supply one. This, as he remarks in his opening sentence, is an impossible task, but he is not daunted; for if the quest of the historical Jesus illuminated "the amazing ingenuity of the human mind" rather than the historical Jesus, yet "the scholarship of the last two or three decades . . . has gradually been accumulating materials for a worthier and truer portrait". These materials he assembles on what might be called a Dodd-Manson-Vincent Taylor axis; the method employed is that of his earlier books, the synthetic method. No one employs this method better than Dr Hunter and despite his disclaimer of originality one would have preferred more of his own admirably compressed summaries. Some hundred and fifty quotations from modern writers in a hundred and thirty pages of text is surely an overdose, and together with biblical references and citations they so break up the narrative as to make it difficult for any portrait of Jesus to emerge.

But the method has some limitations. In the first place, the reader suspects that it may be trying to prove too much, and that he is being hurried too quickly past evidence which does not fit the pattern. The Markan outline of the ministry of Jesus is adopted almost without question; even the first beatitude, despite the future tense in the remaining beatitudes, is claimed for a doctrine of realized eschatology in which references to a future kingdom are interpreted in terms of the Resurrection or Pentecost or the World Church; the evidence that Jesus consciously identified Himself with the Suffering

Servant is said to be abundant, to question which is the "merest scepticism"; the Lukan version of the Last Supper is dismissed with the words "a textual problem", and the locality of the Resurrection appearances is declared to be no problem for a Christian, since it was as easy for Jesus to appear both in Jerusalem and in Galilee as in Jerusalem only or in Galilee only.

In the second place, Dr Hunter adopts the now common procedure of practically ignoring the questions raised by the form-critics on the ground of the sceptical conclusions to which their method has given rise. There is nothing from Bultmann, Dibelius or R. H. Lightfoot amongst his quotations. The last sixty pages in which the text of the sources Q, M and L is printed *in extenso* will undoubtedly be of great value to the student, but is he not likely, without further warning, to take these sources for much more solid things than they really are, and will he suspect that he is dealing with material which has behind it a long history of theological interpretation which is intimately connected with the life and worship of the Church? He will hardly be made aware by this book that the Passion narratives are soaked with the language of the Psalms, especially of Psalm xxii, or that the Temptation story, which is said to be "a piece of spiritual autobiography told to the disciples by Jesus Himself", is so deeply rooted in Deuteronomy, or that the story of the Transfiguration, which is interpreted as an imaginative release from tension giving rise to vision and audition, is as replete with theological motifs as would appear from the studies of G. H. Boobyer and A. M. Ramsey. The book invites comparison with an earlier attempt to hand over to the ordinary reader the results of New Testament studies, *The Riddle of the New Testament*. In the latter book the problem was more radically conceived as the problem whether the life and death of Jesus were submerged by a piety and faith wholly beyond His horizon; the critical method was demonstrated more clearly in such a way that the reader could follow it at work; and the findings were both far fewer and more pungent. Have New Testament studies now advanced so far that the time has come to put in the sickle for the harvest, or is the primary need still "of proper sowing"?

Corpus Christi College,
Oxford.

C. F. Evans.

Reformed Dogmatics. Set out and illustrated from the sources by Heinrich Heppe Revised and edited by Ernst Bizer, with a foreword by Karl Barth. English translation by G. T. Thomson. Allen and Unwin. 50s.

This is a translation of a work prepared originally in 1861 as a compendium of the classical theological teaching of the Reformed churches. Its method is not altogether unlike that of More and Cross's *Anglicanism*, but the quotations are much shorter and are written into a continuous narrative by the editor, who sometimes

summarizes rather than quotes. The authors most frequently quoted are the scholastics of the seventeenth century rather than the formative theologians of the sixteenth—Amandus, Polanus, Cocceius, Turretinus, Heidegger are referred to more often than Calvin—and there is a characteristic Continental disregard of English sources, although Owen is mentioned once or twice. A separate compendium exists of the teaching of the Lutheran churches.

Formidable though the book is, to read it is a most rewarding and salutary experience. It is impossible for a reader who has little or no acquaintance with the sources to say how reliable the compendium is, but comfort may be taken from the fact that Karl Barth commends it warmly and declares that he himself has found it useful. Most theological questions are dealt with and there are long sections on such subjects as the Holy Scriptures, the doctrine of God, predestination, sin, the work of Christ, justification and the Church. Every page is packed with matter, and anyone who is thinking seriously on theological questions will find it worth while to look up Heppe on their particular subject. The discussions of the divine prescience and of the nature of sin and of the sacraments show how far from being merely cold and speculative these theologians were. Whatever the limitations of Protestant scholasticism, it has the great merit of being firmly grounded on Scripture, and, in consequence, Heppe speaks much more directly to present-day theology than does St Thomas.

Immensely valuable as this is as a source-book, its value as an introduction to Dogmatics for the student seems to be much more questionable. All students will be the better for submitting themselves to the discipline of these strong and austere minds, with their ability to think clearly, firmly and, despite Bizer's reservations about the section on Natural Theology, in a strictly theological manner. But, although they teach modern readers much about theology that has been forgotten, they are unaware of many matters which we have to take into account.

This becomes particularly clear in relation to their almost complete lack of interest in the question of presuppositions. As in Catholicism, the validity of the theological and philosophical framework in which they move is taken for granted. The fact that they do not use the methods of Biblical Criticism is only one aspect of this. They are unaware of the influence of sociological factors upon knowledge and they do not appear to see ethical matters as presenting any peculiar problems to theology itself. That this should be so may be very natural, but it reminds us that more is needed than that we should all now become good Protestant scholastics, for all the world as though the Enlightenment, the Romantic Movement and the rise of technological civilization had never taken place. Here is invaluable material for theological construction, but, as the example of Karl Barth, who has made most use of this material in our own day, shows, we have to build to-day in our own style and, in so doing, must use other material as well.

Oxted, Surrey. Daniel Jenkins.

African Ideas of God. Edited by Edwin Smith. Edinburgh House Press. 21s.

Twelve authors contribute to this book. Each writes of the area in which he has worked; each is an expert presenting material which is the fruit of his own research and observation; the area covered ranges from Sierra Leone across to the Sudan and southwards to the Union of South Africa by way of Uganda and Nyasaland. It is a book which will be of great value to newcomers in the field. The bringing together into one volume of the beliefs of so many tribes demonstrates the existence of a common pattern of beliefs which both illuminates them all and forbids precarious speculation such as ignores the pattern.

Yet I found it a profoundly disappointing book. I must emphasize that I write as an arm-chair theorist and that I possess no expert knowledge. I write as one who has read, and been greatly impressed by, Dr Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a non-Christian World*. My disappointment is due to the fact that no contributor to this symposium has read—or, it would seem, even heard of—Dr Kraemer. He threw out a challenge which needs to be met. Here was a chance to meet it. The failure to meet it might be excusable in an academic anthropological study, but this is a book by missionaries for missionaries. There is no reason to doubt the truth of the facts here presented to the reader, but as a student of Kraemer I find myself constantly querying the conclusions drawn from the facts.

Let me set side by side a passage from Dr Kraemer and a passage from *African Ideas of God*. "There is an unerring instinct in man that the most important thing in a new religion is not that it is a further development or a more distinct affirmation of what he knew already, but that it really is something new. The really new has recruiting power" (Kraemer, p. 345). "Belief in Imana seems to make very little positive difference to the conduct of these people; they only pray to him or call upon him when in real trouble, and they have very little fear of being punished by him. They know that on rare occasions he is supposed to punish, but his vengeance is a thing of this world only, in the shape of death or severe hardship; Imana has no jurisdiction over those already dead. In bringing the Gospel to these people, the missionary is greatly helped by having such a high conception of God already in the minds of the people. There are many ideas about Him which are lacking, and some which are totally false, but taken all round the picture they have of Him is a true one, and gives a wonderful starting-point for further teaching" (*African Ideas*, p. 199 f.).

As a theorist I have no doubt but that Kraemer is right. These "points of contact" can be misleading—can, indeed, jeopardize the preaching of the Gospel. That is the theory. But what of the practice? Are the results such as to justify the taking of the risk? Are the results more meagre when one is suspicious of apparent points of contact than when one welcomes them into one's technique? (I must not give the impression that Kraemer wholly sets his face against making use of points of contact.) Those are some of the questions I had hoped to find answered.

I find (and again I must emphasize that I write as a theorist) that the authors are over-eager to accept evidence that the African has a belief in a Supreme God. There are anthropologists like J. H. Driberg who roundly assert that the High God idea does not exist in Africa. Our authors disagree. But their evidence is not compelling. What is one to make of this? "The Yoruba people believe in a supreme God. Yet nowhere do they offer any regular worship to him. There are no temples, no priests, no cult-houses, no offerings, no shrines, no communal prayers or sacrifices" (p. 229). Is it really possible to build belief in the Christian God on that foundation?

It is, perhaps, unfair to find fault with a book for not doing what it does not set out to do. Possibly I am to blame for coming to it with the wrong questions. As a pre-Kraemer book for pre-Kraemer readers I could recommend it without reservations.

St Paul's College, Grahamstown. F. C. Synge.

The English Reformation to 1558. By T. M. Parker. (Home Univ. Lib.) O.U.P. 5s.

This is such an excellent book that the one or two misprints (*e.g.*, on p. 153 and "Hokker" in the Index) cause to the reader the vexation which the author must feel; so agreeably does Mr Parker take you along that unwittingly you have entered into a partnership with him—it is your book as well as his—and it is an alliance that does not for one moment permit you to be a sleeping partner. One minor criticism may perhaps be allowed—the use of French and German words (*e.g.*, *bouleversement* used three times) is hardly necessary. The sole major criticism is that the book ends with the year 1558. This is not a satisfactory date, and obviously Mr Parker feels this, for he inserts an Epilogue of 16 pages dealing with the Elizabethan Settlement. It is to be hoped that he will speedily follow up this present book with a volume taking us to 1603.

In his *Life of Carlyle* Froude defines History as "the account of the actions of men; and in 'actions' are comprehended the thoughts, opinions, motives, impulses of the actors and of the circumstances in which their work was executed". By this definiton Mr Parker has written history splendidly. Onwards from Wolsey's person and position—themselves enshrining the problem of the sixteenth century—all the actors bring before you their thoughts, opinions, motives and impulses, the big ones in the front of the stage, others back-stage, or peeping out from the wings, according to their contributions. In masterly comprehension are laid before you the ebb and flow of religious changes, their relationship with European affairs, the pride of dynasty and love of this England Empire intertwined; not a fact is omitted, yet the proportions are admirable. Nor is this all; the book presents the movement of this period's story in calm, objective manner, so completely free from bias that no one could possibly guess what are Mr Parker's personal views in church affairs; a refutation of the notion so commonly held that history cannot be interestingly written unless an author is biased.

The book has other excellences—its ease and clarity of style, the author's refusal to write cynically, his efforts to understand and portray the psychological make-up of the leading characters. There is no striving after effect—no attempt to be clever—no suggestion of facile recourse to commonplace books. The book may have nothing new in factual knowledge to contribute, but nobody can fail to profit from its perusal, expert or learner. It is small and limited in the time-range, but within that range it is in every sense complete, and it has come to stay.

CANTERBURY. JOHN SHIRLEY.

THE STATE AND SCHOOL EDUCATION 1640-1660 IN ENGLAND AND WALES. By W. A. L. Vincent. S.P.C.K. (Published for the Church Historical Society.) 11s. 6d.

For students this survey will be a useful time-saver, and for many general readers something of an eye-opener. For the convenience of the first, Mr Vincent has consulted more than 200 printed sources (admirably classified in Appendix B) and compressed his findings within 130 pages. For the enlightenment of the second, he has shown —albeit indirectly, for he is not concerned to argue a case or point a moral—that not a few of the bright ideas, resolutions and complaints which issue from modern educational circles are new only in their phraseology.

We are reminded that at the beginning of the seventeenth century the three main institutions of our educational system—the elementary or "petty" school, the grammar school and the university—already existed. But a period of acute social disturbance, including civil war, hardly provides the best atmosphere for cultural advance, and there would have been little cause for surprise if, between 1640 and 1660, educational interests had been wholly neglected. Yet this did not happen. If the Long Parliament sequestered ecclesiastical revenues and royalist properties it safeguarded the finances of the schools, not excepting royal and ecclesiastical foundations; it exempted all places of learning from the levies imposed to maintain the armed forces; working through various commissions it improved the efficiency of many schools and founded new ones; in particular, it "instituted the first organized movement for a system of national education in Wales"; and by 1649 it could justly claim that it had "ever been zealous to continue and establish all Works and Foundations tending to the advancement of learning". The same policy was vigorously pursued under the Protectorate. It is worth recording that between 1600 and 1660 there were in England and Wales no fewer than 1,312 grammar schools (listed under counties in Appendix A); for 390 of these (if my arithmetic is correct) continuity can certainly be proved from the opening of the century to beyond the Commonwealth period, and the same is probably true of many others.

The duty of the State to provide for the education of its children has long been accepted. But how far can State *control* legitimately

extend? In our own day we have instances from abroad of the way in which a whole educational system can be bent to serve the ends of a particular political creed. After a fashion the same sort of thing happened in England 300 years ago: stern measures were adopted to ensure that the teaching profession was well affected towards the Government, and "malignant" schoolmasters, however competent, were as liable to ejection as clergymen of the same persuasion. Yet there was a fundamental difference. Under the Puritan régime, as under that which it temporarily displaced, State interference was inspired by ideals which transcended the merely political. The aim was to produce not only good Commonwealth men but good Christian men; to advance learning *and* piety, manners *and* godliness; it is significant that the most notable educational work of the Long Parliament was achieved by its Commissioners for the Propagation of the Gospel.

THOMAS WOOD.

MANSFIELD.

A YEAR OF GRACE: Passages Chosen and Arranged to Express a Mood about God and Man. By Victor Gollancz. Gollancz. 10s. 6d.

If Mr Gollancz follows here in the footsteps of Mr A. Huxley, it is with a difference. He directs attention to the sub-title. He has formed his florilegium in order to express through others' words the convictions of his more cheerful moments. Mr Huxley wished to produce support for a doctrine. Mr Gollancz disclaims anything as definite. Yet he does more than affirm an affective faith in God's mercy and love, the teaching of Christ, sin and repentance, human relations, integrity, humility, and freedom. He does more than communicate a personal delight in the discovery that many writers, both great and less great, and some musicians had forestalled his own feeling and brought it to exquisite expression. He may be regarded as having put into order the literary and sometimes musical sources of his life's inspiration, comfort, and encouragement. For that reason, whether, as requested, the quotations are read consecutively from beginning to end, or whether the temptation is not resisted to range here and there, to and fro, many will find that the volume is a road to inspiration, comfort, and encouragement for them too. The benefit will be none the less if they do not invariably agree or if they miss among those put to contribution some to whom any one may owe a debt of his own and meet some whom they hold in only moderate esteem. For instance, Mr Gollancz believes he is a Pelagian, not having perceived that Augustine's teaching perhaps makes more for Christian humility, which is why the Church, in her wisdom, has adopted it. Apparently he prefers Bertrand Russell to Pascal, and of course the setting of some more august musician could have been chosen for the *Agnus Dei*. Such idiosyncrasy is all to the good. For while it is true that in these pages Mr Gollancz, though mute, gives himself away, and that the extracts, especially when read consecutively, portray his taste, his sympathies, and the bedrock of his profundity, it is also true that here is the opportunity, each time we

purr with approval or cock an eyebrow, of asking why, and hence of not so much learning about Mr Gollancz as of obeying the age-old behest and of learning about ourselves.

MONTGOMERY BELGION.

THE PROPHETIC FAITH. By Martin Buber. Macmillan. 17s. 6d.

Here is a very welcome book on the religion of the Old Testament by an eminent scholar and philosopher who approaches his subject, not merely from the conventional standpoint of the literary critic, but with the passionate faith of the Jewish mystic. While making proper use of historical-critical methods, the author shows that his predominant interest lies in a field which has too often suffered neglect in O.T. studies—that of the theological content of Israel's faith in its uniqueness, opposition to, and transcendence of, the religions of Israel's neighbours. Faith—not the phenomena of religious cult analysable by the scientific critic—is the keynote of this study. It is a *prophetic* faith, because in its spirituality and transcendence it eludes premature embodiment in a false absolute, but it was not the discovery of the eighth-century prophets: it is the living creative principle by which Israel was moulded from its humblest origins. This faith implies as its co-relate the biblical God who reveals Himself to His chosen servants, who is ever with them in the continually changing unpredictable phases of the mysterious pilgrimage on which He leads them, whose very nature is His eternal sovereignty by which He claims sway over every domain of human life. The naturalistic interpretation of the O.T. which would derive the God of the patriarchs from the numinous experiences connected with the immemorial holy places of Canaan and would equate YHVH with the nature-mountain-god of the Kenites is here decisively refuted by an argument which gathers its cogency from a deeper, more spiritual, study of the O.T. viewed as a whole, and as an unbroken stream of revelation. Especially fruitful in this book is the way in which linguistics is made the basis of theology. The hidden meaning of a single word (*e.g.*, "stray" in Deut. xxvi, 5) is drawn out and vitally connected with its use in other, apparently unrelated, passages of Scripture, so that the theological unity of the O.T. is ever and again springing into view.

The key to the interpretation of the inner meaning of Israel's historical developments the author finds in the person and role of the "nabi". The "nabi" was the original vehicle of the revelation by which Israel was constituted as a holy people and the Covenant established, and in subsequent momentous epochs it was the "nabi" who repeatedly intervened to safeguard the uniqueness of the faith and to rescue the people from a disastrous misunderstanding of it by analogy with the concepts and cultic practices everywhere prevalent in the ancient world. Thus it is the "nabi" Moses who teaches that cardinal doctrine of Hebrew theology—the transcendence of the self-revealing God who mysteriously elects and separates, who promises His gracious presence everywhere and always to His chosen servants,

yet in such forms as He alone can determine, whose presence may never be materialized, localized or confined to any specific media.

In the institutions of the priesthood, kingship and temple, as developed and used, the author sees an attempt to negate the faith by which the true Israel lives, to materialize the sovereignty of Yahweh apart from the inspiration of the Spirit and to confine it to the cultic sphere alone. Samuel the prophet is the true and trusted priest who refuses to restore the ark because God does not want the people to exploit Him but to serve Him. The popular demand for a king proceeds from disappointment with God's "ruach" government. The people crave for the privilege of a continuous uninterrupted enjoyment of heaven's favour, firmly and biologically established on earth in the shape of a ruling dynasty. The prayer is granted only on condition that the king becomes a true "nagid", realizing his responsibility to obey the divine Lord who has commissioned and authorized him. The king is God's vice-regent on earth, but just where we detect an apparent approximation to the Eastern conception of the king as adopted by the deity, the prophetic spirit in Israelite religion effects a vital contradistinction from the world of oriental myth and symbolism. The characteristic feature in Israel is the religious realism with which the conception of the king's responsibility is expressed, giving rise to the role of the prophet as one who rebukes the king for disobedience to the declared will of God. Solomon betrays the Israelite conception of the divine sovereignty expressed in the common life by attempting to set up a neat division between the realm of heaven and the realm of earth, withdrawing the latter from the leadership of God and thus destroying the very foundations of the Covenant-people. The same prophetic view of history is inculcated by the Yahwist narrator whose sense of the divine sovereignty reaches its culminating expression in the story of the tower of Babel where the self-sufficiency of human civilization stands condemned.

The section of the book dealing with the eighth-century prophets is entitled "The Turning to the Future", and the title enshrines the author's profound insight into the nature of the prophetic vocation. He emphasizes the distinction between true creative prophecy and the mere mechanical prediction of a future conceived as already fixed by immutable divine decree. To be a "nabi" means, not to predict the unknown future, but to show God at work in the present hour, to put before the people the necessity of decision in face of the vital issues which prophetic insight discovers as giving its abiding significance to the present hour. The aim of all genuine Hebrew prophecy, even of the unmitigated announcement of complete disaster, is to appeal to the awful power of decision committed to free and responsible humanity and to "evoke the extreme act"—the turning to God expressed in the word *t' shubhah*. There is here something remarkably akin to the thought of Bergson: "*Chacun de nos moments est une espèce de création. . . . Nous nous créons continuellement nous-mêmes.*" The rejection of the prophetic message, however, with the consequent disruption of the theocratic state,

brought about an epoch of crisis and suffering in which again the prophet is assigned a role of high importance. The way of suffering becomes the way to a deeper experience of God in His supra-logical reality and truth, and Job, the typical sufferer in the storm and stress of the post-exilic period, is certified as a "nabi", as was Abraham (Gen. xx, 7), both by the way in which God refers to him and by his duty of intercession (Job xlii, 8). Finally, in accordance with the rich background of his thought, the author offers us a new approach to the problem of the identity of the Isaianic Servant—without having a corporate character, he is more than a single human person. Under the figure of the Servant of Yahweh is represented the evolution of the destiny of the Israelite "nabi". There is first the frustrated labour of the pre-exilic prophets symbolized by the arrow that must remain in its quiver; then the fulfilment of the vocation to suffer in Job and the pious Psalmist; lastly the crown of this suffering, the release of the arrow from darkness and the liberation of enslaved peoples, the setting up of God's Kingdom on earth through the cross of the faithful "nabi".

Harold Knight.

University of Nottingham.

SHORTER NOTICES

Lactantius' Epitome of the Divine Institutes. Edited and translated with a Commentary by E. H. Blakeney. S.P.C.K. 11s.

Once again Mr E. H. Blakeney has added a valuable contribution to the library of early Church historians. This edition of the epitome which Lactantius himself wrote of his great work *The Divine Institutes* is a labour of love, and deserves wide recognition. Mr Blakeney gives a short introduction to the work, the Latin text, for which he uses Routh (1845), making some changes in the light of Brandt's edition for the Vienna corpus (1890), an admirable translation, and brief notes at the end. To the notes numerous additions could be made. But it is not Mr Blakeney's intention to provide a specimen of erudition, but rather a book which "might usefully serve as a textbook in theological colleges, and in the upper forms of public schools, and might also be read by ordination candidates".

The *Epitome* sums up in brief form the chief arguments which are to be found in almost all the Christian apologists of the second and third centuries—the moral shortcomings of the pagan gods, the ludicrous worship of the Egyptians with their divine menagerie, the failure of the philosophers to break with the polytheism that their philosophy rejected, and an exposition of Christian morality. These and many other such themes are the stock-in-trade of the apologists of this period. If Lactantius has nothing very new to say, at least he expresses it with less tedium than some of his predecessors. As Mr Blakeney puts it in his charming lines *After reading Lactantius* (p. 125), his work is marked by a "calm good sense". It is a useful summary of what a distinguished Christian layman at the beginning of the fourth century regarded as important.

In an age when the Church Fathers are not commonly perused with assiduous attention, even in translation, by ordinands and theological students, it is good to find an attempt made to draw the attention of such students to the interest of patristic writings. This edition of the *Epitome* may serve as an introduction that will lead on to further study.

Queens' College, Cambridge. H. Chadwick.

A Treasury of Russian Spirituality. Edited by G. P. Fedotov. Sheed and Ward. 25s.

We are told in Fedotov's preface that "one of the most prominent features of (Tsar) Peter's reform was an almost complete elimination of the Church from all fields of social and political life. . . . The only role left to it was that of apologist for the established order. Accepting this part, willingly or unwillingy, the Church was forced to concentrate its moral action upon the individual."

But all through the ages religious individualism has been regarded as the special vocation of the Orthodox Church. A desire to escape from the world and to serve it by self-denying "kenotic" witness from the other side of the gulf which yawns between the man in the street and the holy man—this had always been a marked characteristic and was only intensified in the eighteenth century.

St Theodosius (eleventh century) "would go forth at night, and, stripping himself to the waist, sit in the open, spinning wool and singing the psalms of David. His body would be covered with blood drawn by the mosquitoes and flies which devoured it, but our father would sit there quietly until Matins."

St Sergius (fourteenth century) even as a child "paid no heed to those who ran into the fields to play and disport themselves in vain amusements, nor did he make friends with those who were giddy or profane. He devoted himself wholly to the praise of God, delighting in it."

This type of spirituality is as far removed from ordinary flesh and blood as the icons and effigies reproduced in these pages, yet one is bound to admit its fascination: the Russian loved it then and in his heart he loves it still. Strange incredible stories here retailed show at least what extremes of austerity were expected of a "staretz", and John the Baptist, who came neither eating nor drinking, would there have been more quickly recognized for what he was than the Lord Himself, who did both and mixed easily with all sorts and conditions, spanning the gulfs that separate man from man.

The fact that all nine selected saints are ecclesiastics suggests a narrowly restricted conception of sanctity. Dostoievsky would surely have included a number of laymen and thereby earned our gratitude. But no true picture of a Russian saint or sinner is entirely comprehensible to the Western mind. Father John of Cronstadt and Father Yetchaninov alone of this company speak intelligibly to the present generation of the things which belong to our peace.

The Deanery, Windsor Castle. Eric Hamilton: Bishop.

Nicolas Berdyaev: An Introduction to his Thought. By George Seaver. James Clarke and Co. 6s.

Dr Seaver, the biographer and interpreter of Albert Schweitzer and Edward Wilson, has undertaken a more difficult task in this attempt to introduce the thought of Berdyaev to simple-minded English readers. Berdyaev is by no means an easy writer, and his books, mystical, prophetic and unsystematic, rest not only upon the rich Russian tradition but also upon a wide appreciation of Western thought. Dr Seaver, within the narrow limits allowed him, has made a not unsuccessful attempt to sort out Berdyaev's teaching under five main headings, with very full illustrative quotations, and sufficient exposition to enable the reader to appreciate their originality and importance. But there has been little space for any presentation of the background of Berdyaev's thought, either in his own life or in the setting of Russian theology and political philosophy. Instead there are expositions, notably the full introductory chapter, in which Dr Seaver's own beliefs, and sometimes his anti-ecclesiastical and anti-dogmatic prejudices, tend to run away with him, and readers who do not know Berdyaev's own writings may easily be misled into thinking that he would have endorsed all that Dr Seaver says. Berdyaev could be a shrewd critic alike of ecclesiastical and of rational dogma, but his criticism was always prophetic and constructive. Dr Seaver, perhaps in part through his efforts to be at once comprehensive and concise, sometimes fails to do justice to views which he cannot share, and, as a result, gives a negative turn to his survey of Berdyaev's thought which Berdyaev himself would surely have repudiated. But, with that caution, the book may be commended as a very serviceable introduction to a great writer.

Oxford. L. W. Grensted.

Aspects Intérieurs de L'Islam. By Jean Abd el Jalil. Éditions du Seuil, Paris.

This book should prove useful both to missionaries and others concerned in the relationship of Islam with Christianity in days when this needs revising and reconditioning. The author (whose work is supported with thirty-five pages of notes and quotations) feels he is catering for the general rather than specialized reader. He throws light on problems, such as may make for reconsideration or correction of too hastily reached judgments. There is no imposition of personal opinions, but the desire to supply facts for the formation of the readers'. There is insistence, too, on Christian responsibility for demonstrating religious values in books and life.

The volume is a collection of seven articles, dealing in turn with the Qur'an and Muslim Thought; Islam and History; Muslim Aspirations in the "Salifi" Movement (for which the author has hope); Egypt of To-morrow; The Praying East; Elements of Religious Form; and the Muslim Community and Christian Communities. The ways in which trends in Islam impinge on the Christian

position are noted sympathetically. There is deprecation of formal ritualism and welcome for the mystic search after the deeper values. Al Hallaj is not forgotten and his prayers quoted. There is a happy prospect in Egypt's to-morrow with the rise of Taha Hussein, described as possessed of rare intelligence and mental balance. There is an urge for the greater study of Islamic prayer, whether that of pilgrimage or daily ritual, personal piety or mystic rapture. Another Muslim type different from Egypt's Minister of Education is King Ibn Sa'ud. If Turkey is admired for her progress during twenty-five years, there is fascination in what the Wahhabi Monarch has accomplished—even if we hardly know how assimilation will come about between the borrowings of Western civilization and the strictness of Arabian puritanism. The "Salifi" movement of reform is well balanced—not a conservative reaction and nothing more, and no blind adoption of what comes from Europe. Instead there must be a return to simplest orthodxy coupled with ability to adapt.

There is perhaps a greater danger for Islam in Modernism than there has been in the Christian Church. By becoming "modern" Islam must not forget its spiritual values. We would add that Islam could learn here from twentieth-century Christianity; for the Church anticipated the mosque in facing the impacts of scientific thought. Christians, too, in facing their crises in the milieu of Western civilization and in striving to relearn the meaning of that Universalism of which they are depositaries, should both appreciate the fundamental Muslim conceptions of unity and grasp vividly the difficulties facing Egypt and other countries. We might be a little less superficial and critical, a little more understanding and acquainted with facts. Both Christian and Muslim face half a century in which they must meet throughout the world. Perhaps almost the greatest need for Christianity is a renewed appraisal of Islam in history and prospect. It is certainly one promising sign to know that there are Christians in France equally concerned in a reorientation of the approach to Islam.

Muriel Guthrie.

Wishaw,
Lanarkshire.

What is Existentialism? By Roland Bailey. S.P.C.K. 1s.

Existentialism and Christian Thought. By Roger Troisfontaines, S.J. Translated by Martin Jarrett-Kerr, C.R. Adam and Charles Black. 4s. 6d.

Dr Bailey's paper is intended to answer the question that "an increasing number of people are asking". He begins by expounding in traditional terms the distinction between essence and existence. "The first thing that the existentialist believes is that existence is important and essence is not." But, he says, existentialists "also use the word 'existence' in what is for them a much more important sense: when referring to people in order to indicate full and real living". This kind of living is nowhere further defined, and it might

seem to be implied that only an existentialist can live existentially, and only by living existentially can you discover what an existentialist is. Where definitions are obscure, instances may illuminate, but Dr Bailey's treatment of particular thinkers, inevitably sketchy, suffers from something worse than imprecision when he says that Jaspers is "a professed Roman Catholic" and attributes the atheism of Sartre to the following of Heidegger, whose anguished sense of "the absence of God" is something very different.

To Dr Bailey the words of Schweitzer at the end of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* are "familiar". This suggests to me that he belongs to a generation when a great deal of the best Christian thinking in Great Britain was devoted to grappling directly with the problems that were baffling the contemporary secular mind. Of late years this kind of Christian engagement has been continued, appropriately enough, by philosophers more than by theologians. To find a theological concern with the contemporary crisis at the same level of seriousness we must go to French Roman Catholics. It is rather as an illustration of the new Roman Catholic approach to problems of secular thinking than for any new information that I would commend Fr Jarrett-Kerr's translation of Père Troisfontaines' book. The observations on particular philosophers are acute and perceptive, but they may assume more familiarity with the subject than the English reader possesses. It is the second part of the book that is important.

To Père Troisfontaines

> Christianity and existentialism are no more opposed to each other in their fundamental doctrine than in their method: the doctrine that each man must freely determine his being.

He has to contend still with those of his own communion who accuse him of missing "the opportunity to dispose of existentialism as such". In him, as in his fellow-Jesuits Père de Lubac and Père Daniélou, the influence of the Greek Fathers is stronger than St Thomas. They lead them into places where English churchmen have been under the same influences, when subjected to the same kind of pressures, so that the English reader is constantly reminded of Hort or of F. D. Maurice. More reading in this kind of Roman Catholic literature might do something to revive a tradition that is in danger of lapsing as the reaction against Liberalism draws us away from all forms of Latitude, from the civilized elasticity of mind that has always been common to French and English Christian humanists, to-day as in the seventeenth century.

George Every, S.S.M.

Kelham.

Ruth and Jonah. By George A. F. Knight. (Torch Bible Commentaries.) S.C.M. Press. 6s.

If one may judge by the present volume, this new series is liberal, in the sense that "The findings and views of modern scholarship on the text of the Bible have been taken fully into account." But the

doctrine is orthodoxy. The Old Testament is not read with the veil over the eyes, but is interpreted by means of the New. We see some of the influence of the revival of the allegorical method.

On p. 34 (commenting on Ruth ii, 8) we read: "The men did the scything and the women followed them up and tied the sheaves in bundles." Surely in those days they used sickles or reaping-hooks? The word "nice" is employed too often in its colloquial sense. Thirty-five pages of commentary to fifty-six of introductions and appendices seems disproportioned. But Professor Knight has done in a clear, readable, earnest, painstaking fashion what he set out to do. Briefly, his thesis is that Jonah and Ruth were anonymous pamphlets circulated in post-exilic days to combat Ezra's policy of isolationism. Ruth defends mixed marriages. Jonah attacks the refusal to evangelize the heathen. Jonah (the dove) represents the first Israel, which missed its chance. Christ is shown by the dove at His baptism to be the Second Israel. Through Him the third Israel, the Church, is called, not so much "to enjoy her great salvation" or "to deepen her spiritual life" as "to proclaim the compassionate love of God for all men, to proclaim it in fact to Nineveh, a name which is representative of the economic and political life of the world of men".

C. W. Quin.

Narraghmore Rectory,
Co. Kildare.

An Introduction to New Testament Thought. By Frederick C. Grant. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press. $3.75.

The title of this work by a distinguished American theologian indicates that it is not another N.T. theology, but intended to remind its readers that Christianity was from the first more than a reformed Judaism. It was equipped by its possession of "the good news of God" to conquer the pagan world not only by its manner of life but by its thinking. An exhaustive historical exposition of the N.T. writings reveals them as containing only "incipient theologies". The variety and diversity of these are determined by the geographical "areas" of the Græco-Roman world invaded by the Christian gospel, and by the intellectual and moral needs of those who sought to grasp the significance of the evangel and required instruction. The vital experience of the good news of God in sending Jesus Christ, in all these areas of N.T. thought, is the unifying factor pervading the differing "theologies" in the N.T. writings. The theologies may overlap, which is not necessarily a sign of interdependence.

This necessarily brief summary of the author's theme must be accompanied by a deep appreciation of his thorough, frank and realistic treatment of it. It is, however, strange that, rejecting as he does all humanistic interpretations of the person of Jesus, he does not regard His unique filial consciousness which urged and enabled Him to interpret His own person and messianic mission to His disciples, as the fount and origin of all N.T. thought. On the contrary, the "messianic consciousness" of Jesus is a misnomer. The

Messianic titles, including the suffering Son of man, were conferred upon Him by the worshipping community and read back into the Gospels. There His actual personality, mission and teaching are re-interpreted in terms of what His "name" had accomplished through the Christian mission. The Temptation story has no autobiographical value, is no real temptation but a messianic test on the part of Satan, in the form of a vision seen and heard "by some spiritual genius of the early church", . . . "of the way in which Jesus faced the problems of His life". This most interesting book would carry much more conviction if the author had taken the Gospel narratives more seriously, allowing them to tell the story, as they seek to do, of their own origin: "of all that Jesus began to do and to teach", "the salvation which at the first began to be proclaimed by the Lord". The "Word made flesh" is in its essence the assertion that the evangel, as the "visible gospel" and matrix of all N.T. "theologies", was first mediated through the five human senses of Jesus and His disciples.

R. H. Strachan.

Cambridge.

The Four Gospels in One Story. Written as a modern biography by Freeman Wills Crofts. Longmans. Cloth, 8s.; paper, 5s.

This is the work of a layman for laymen, and a labour of love. It was begun as a hobby, to satisfy the author's faith in answer to criticism that the gospels are inconsistent. The task led him to seek light on obscure passages as well as apparent inconsistencies from standard commentaries, and the result is something of a *tour de force*, a conflation of all the text of all four gospels. The arrangement is reasonable enough, with brief notes to support the order, and the translation or paraphrase adopted where necessary. Mr Crofts obviously leans towards rationalist interpretations, but he is humble and fair, and gives useful notes on differences of interpretations. He adopts some of the more popular dislocations of text, but cautiously refrains from any radical selection.

This is, however, the work of a noted writer of detective fiction, presenting the gospels as a modern biography, presumably with his criminologist readers in mind. They will be disappointed, I fear; for, although the eternal gospel continues to stir the minds of men, this particular translation does not help as much as it might. "On the way he engaged in private prayer" is not a happy rendering of Luke ix, 18. Mr Crofts could have afforded to forgo some of his caution and write more freely; the detective literary style might have been closer in spirit to the original. One cannot help wishing that more theological detection had been used to produce something less exhaustive but more representative of the gospels. Yet for his complete labour of love many layfolk, enquirers or teachers, and priests too, will be grateful to Mr Crofts.

J. H. Churchill.

Tottenham.

THE REFORMED PASTOR. By Richard Baxter. Edited with an Introduction by John T. Robinson. Epworth Press. 8s. 6d.

Mr Robinson's edition of *The Reformed Pastor* was originally published in 1939, and it now appears in a new and revised form. It was Baxter's intention to explain the nature and duties of the Christian ministry, and to promote Christian unity. He insists that the ministry is a ministry to individuals, and describes his own method of instructing his parishioners family by family. The terms of the Worcestershire Association, Baxter's experiment in Christian unity, are printed in an appendix. In his introductory essay Mr Robinson gives examples of the influence which Baxter's book has had on men of every kind, from Baxter's own contemporaries to Bishop Hensley Henson, who described it as "the best manual of the clergyman's duty in the language".

W. D. MAUNDRELL.

SPARSHOLT, WINCHESTER.

BOOKS RECEIVED

(*Mention here neither implies nor precludes subsequent comment.*)

ABINGDON-COKESBURY PRESS (NASHVILLE 2, TENN.): Ronald H. Bainton, *Here I Stand* ($4.75).

A. AND C. BLACK: Richard Heard, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (12s. 6d.).

GEOFFREY BLES: Nicolas Berdyaev, *Dream and Reality* (30s.).

BURNS OATES AND WASHBOURNE: Raoul Plus, S.J., *Simplicity* (6s.).

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS: Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian* (15s.).

CENTRALE DRUKKERIJ (NIJMEGEN): J. C. M. Fruytier, S.J., *Het Woord* ΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ *in de Catechesen van Cyrillus van Jeruzalem* (3.90).

CHURCH BOOK ROOM PRESS: H. D. S. Sweetapple, *Pictures and Portraits of Genesis* (2s.).

CHURCHMAN PUBLISHING CO.: F. Barrie Flint, *Towards Christian Parenthood* (2s. 6d.).

FABER AND FABER: A. K. Clarke, *The Universal Character of Christianity* (8s. 6d.).

FAITH PRESS: Patrick Cowley, *Living the Creed* (4s. 6d.).

GOLLANCZ: N. H. G. Robinson, *Faith and Duty* (12s. 6d.).

HODDER AND STOUGHTON: T. Howard Somervell, *The Good News* (8s. 6d.).

INTER-VARSITY FELLOWSHIP: J. N. D. Anderson, *The Evidence for the Resurrection* (6d.).

LONGMANS: J. V. Langmead-Casserley, *No Faith of My Own* (9s. 6d. and 6s. 6d.).

LUTTERWORTH PRESS: John A. Mackay, *Christianity on the Frontier* (8s. 6d.).

MODERN CHURCHMEN'S UNION (MIDDLE CLAYDON, BLETCHLEY): *Prayer Book Revision Suggestions, 1950* (1s. 3d., post free).

MOWBRAY: Jessie M. Cole, *The Church and Family Relationships* (2s. 6d.); Frank Streatfeild, *The State Prayers and Other Variations in the Book of Common Prayer* (6s.).

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS: R. D. Middleton, *Newman at Oxford* (21s.); R. W. Moore, *The Furtherance of the Gospel* (A Primer of Christianity, Part II) (6s. 6d.; School Edition 5s.);G. B. Caird, *The Truth of the Gospel* (A Primer of Christianity, Part III) (6s. 6d.; School Edition 5s.).

RIDGEWAY HOUSE (SHORNE, KENT): M. Chaning-Pearce, *Jean Guitton and Human Love* (1s. 8d., post free); John Trinick, *St Gregory of Nyssa and the Rise of Christian Mysticism* (2s. 2d., post free).

S.P.C.K.: G. G. Willis, *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy* (15s.); E. K. Lee, *The Religious Thought of St John* (17s. 6d.); T. J. Williams, *Priscilla Lydia Sellon* (20s.).

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